

LABOUR

ORGANISER

FEBRUARY 1948

Volume 27 * Number 311

Price Fourpence

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SITUATIONS VACANT

HAMPSTEAD D.L.P. invites applications for the post of **Secretary-Agent**. Conditions and salary in accordance with National Agreement. Closing date, February 28. Applications in writing to the **Honorary Secretary, Hampstead Labour Party, 26, Hemstal Road, London, N.W.6.**

BRECON AND RADNOR D.L.P.—Applications are invited for the post of **Full-time Secretary-Organiser**. Salary and conditions in accordance with National Agreement. Forms upon which application are to be made can be obtained from **Mr. R. D. Weale, Brynderwen, Bronllys, Brecon**, to whom they must be returned not later than March 10th, 1948, together with two references.

DARTFORD D.L.P. invite applications for the post of **Full-time Agent**. The appointment to be made in accordance with the terms of the National Agreement and in association with the National Executive Committee. Application forms can be obtained from **Coun. J. L. Powrie, 42, St. John's Road, Erith, Kent**, to whom they must be returned by 6th March, 1948.

SEDGEFIELD D.L.P.—Applications are invited for the post of **Full-time Agent**. Salary and conditions in accordance with National Agreement. Forms from the **Secretary, Coun. Tom Hudson, Front Street, Trimdon Grange, Trimdon Station, Co. Durham**, to whom they must be returned not later than the 28th of February, 1948. The envelope to be endorsed in the top left-hand corner with the word "Application."

LICHFIELD D.L.P. invites applications for the post of **Full-time Secretary-Agent**. Appointment in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms from **J. Bishop, Labour Party Office, 41 Wade Street, Lichfield, Staffs.**, to whom they should be returned not later than 21st February, 1948.

THE LABOUR PARTY.—Applications are invited for the post of **Assistant District**

Organiser for the Southern Region. Salary £500 per annum rising by three annual increments of £20, £20, and £10 to £550. Forms of application can be obtained from the **National Agent's Department, The Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1**, and must be returned not later than 12th March, 1948.

THE LABOUR PARTY.—Applications are invited for the post of **Administrative Assistant** to the **National Agent**. Salary £400 per annum rising by four yearly increments of £25 to £500. Forms of application can be obtained from the **National Agent's Department, The Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1**, and must be returned not later than 12th March, 1948.

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PUBLISHED BY THE LABOUR PARTY, TRANSPORT HOUSE, SMITH SQUARE, LONDON, S.W.1

Vol. 27. No. 311

FEBRUARY, 1948

Price Fourpence
5/- per annum, post free

The Tide Turns

"THE stock of the Labour Party," says the far from friendly *Daily Mail*, "is rising. Since their heavy defeat at the November municipal elections, the Socialists have made a real recovery. Gravesend marked the turn of the tide."

We agree, and an opinion like this coming from such a source should doubly encourage us. Undeniably there's a new spirit of purposefulness abroad both in the country at large and in our own Movement. An indication of the changing trend of opinion has just been shown at Brighton, where in a municipal by-election a Conservative majority of 1,258 last November was cut to 352 last month.

Our next big local government test will be at the U.D.C. and R.D.C. elections this Spring. We can go into these elections fully confident that circumstances will be much more in our favour than they were last November. As Jean Copeland explains in her article this month, some of our younger parties, particularly in the rural areas, will be fighting their first contests in this campaign.

Nothing is more encouraging to us at Head Office than to observe the real fighting spirit of these parties. For all too long, the squires and their like have sat on their local councils as of by divine right.

Now, with Labour's ideals and achievements winning ever-increasing support in the countryside, Labour candidates have a real chance of victory.

Last November the Tories undoubtedly "cashed in" on a host of popular discontents. The reasons for the Government's decisions on basic petrol and such matters are now much more widely understood. In addition, the rising figures of coal, steel and other basic materials have raised the Government's prestige considerably among the non-political millions.

Well-planned local campaigns, carried out with zest, skill and enthusiasm from now until Polling Day, should help us to recover much of the ground we lost last November.

Go In—And Win!

By JEAN COPELAND, Local Government Officer

There is every reason to expect that the record figure of 1,500 Labour candidates will contest nearly 3,000 vacancies in the 500 urban and rural areas which have elections on Saturday, April 3rd (boat race day), and on the following Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

These elections will be a real test of Labour's strength in urban and rural areas and they challenge us to put out our best efforts.

Although the number of vacancies is approximately the same as in last year's municipal elections, the parallel is only a numerical one. While in the large towns nearly every possible vacancy is contested, there are still many urban and rural areas where it is unusual, or even unknown, for any election to take place. Many of the retiring councillors are simply re-nominated and return to their jobs.

There was a celebrated case last year. Fighting one election for the first time, Labour secured a candidate who at once received a letter from the two retiring "independent" candidates asking him to stand down on the grounds that an election was an injustice to the rate-payers!

New Parties Are Fighting

Nor do the 3,000 vacancies on the urban and rural district councils represent nearly such an important local government sector as the 3,000 vacancies in the November elections. All the boroughs outside London have elections each year for a third of their numbers (excluding aldermen) whereas less than half the urban and rural districts have elections each year and only a third of their membership retires. So, in this sense, these elections are of much less numerical significance than last year's municipal elections.

But for those taking part in them and for the Labour Movement as a whole, these elections are very far from unimportant. One of the most hopeful features in this year's contests is that they are being fought in many areas by new and comparatively untried parties. This does not mean that they are feeble or raw. Far from it. They

are vigorous and alive, ready to fight hard all along the line.

These elections will provide them with a valuable platform for propaganda and, even in the most difficult areas, they will be able to place political issues before the electorate, make new members and stimulate active discussion on both national and local affairs.

Progress in Rural Areas

Last year's elections were remarkable for the progress made in the rural districts. In many different rural areas, Labour gained seats for the first time, and great strides have been made in these same areas in the past twelve months. Increased membership, combined with the widespread satisfaction felt with Labour's agricultural policy, entitled us to hope that this advance will be reflected in the elections.

The main issues presented to the electorate will naturally vary from district to district. In some cases it may be housing, in others the closing of village schools, or even the temporary abolition of basic petrol. The battle may well be a hard one, perhaps carrying special hopes for those who for 12 months have been fighting a lone battle and now see the chance of getting colleagues to second their resolutions.

I do not feel it is for me to boost the *Local Government Bulletin*, but I think that councillors, candidates, canvassers and workers will find it contains some helpful material. We are hoping to publish a double number of the *Bulletin* in March to help all those concerned on their way.

Head Office will also issue a special illustrated news sheets for urban districts entitled "Civic News" (22s. 6d. per 1,000 copies, carriage paid) and for rural areas a double size illustrated sheet called "Country News" (2,000 copies, £2 10s.; 3,000 copies, £3 15s.; 4,000 copies, £5; 5,000 copies, £6 5s.). To secure the widest possible circulation in rural areas, "Country News" will be subsidised at the rate of 15s. per 1,000 copies for orders of 2,000 and

over. A leaflet will be circulated on the purpose and preparation of the candidate's election address together with five model addresses.

Candidates, speakers, canvassers and other workers in the spring elections will find invaluable information in the Local Government Speakers' Handbook and Supplement (one copy 2s.; 12 copies, 19s. post free) and the March 6 issue of "Talking Points" will be a

double number providing good campaign points for all concerned. (Copies of this issue will be available to non-subscribers at 3d. per copy, post free.)

Labour has a great story to tell, both nationally and locally. Let us tell it insistently and with all the resources of publicity we can command. For if we can get the facts to the people, we need not fear the result. Good luck to you all!

A Pioneer Looks Back

By ELIZABETH ANDREWS, J.P.

Mrs. Andrews has been Woman Organiser for Wales from 1919 to 1947, and is now retiring. Here she recalls the Party's pioneering days in which she herself played such an outstanding part.

I became Secretary of the first Women's Section in Wales (Ton Pentre, Rhondda) in 1918, under the new Constitution of the Labour Party when individual membership of the Party was accepted.

On March 10, 1919, I was appointed as Woman Organiser for the Party under the leadership of Dr. Marion Phillips. My work then was not confined to Wales. I was called upon to go further afield doing propaganda work and by-election work. One of the first by-elections at which I took charge of the women's side of the campaign stands out very vividly in my mind. It was the Wrekin by-election, when Mr. Charles Duncan, of the Workers' Union, fought a Mr. Palmer, one of Horatio Bottomley's candidates. It was a contest to be remembered.

Those days were days of great adventure when we set out full of missionary zeal to preach the gospel of Socialism. There were new fields to conquer, barriers to break down, difficulties to overcome, and our chief enemies were misrepresentation, prejudice, fear and ignorance, and our only weapon was our great faith in a great cause which we were certain would inevitably triumph.

We had no material equipment except a few index cards of people to visit, and a report book. As we developed the organisation we found our own equipment, learned to type and do all other necessary work.

My first job when I was appointed was to translate into Welsh some English leaflets on "Why Women

Should Vote Labour." Our salaries and allowances depended on the prosperity of the Party. We voluntarily agreed, when necessary, to cuts in our allowances so as to help the Movement. We were so much part of the Movement — not merely officials — and so inspired by its ideals that no sacrifice was too great.

Volunteers All

I was always very conscious of the fact that I was calling upon men and women to contribute from their meagre wages and to give their voluntary service without which, then, and even to-day, we could not build or maintain a Movement like ours. *The devoted voluntary services of comrades past and present is our greatest treasure and this thought should guard us against ever growing too dictatorial in our work as officers.*

On the women's side I find we can get very near to our comrades in the Movement, entering into their lives, sharing their joys and sorrows, and thus making them feel that we are there to guide and help them in the Movement.

Hailing from a mining family, one of eleven children, and having been called upon to give evidence before the Sankey Coal Commission in 1919 on Housing and Pit Baths, I found easy access to the mining valleys of South Wales, and a common bond of interest among the miners' wives. The three political agents of the South Wales Miners' Federation gave me considerable help with meetings, and for many

years I edited the women's page in the "Colliery Workers' Magazine."

Thrilling Elections

Elections and by-elections in those days were exciting and thrilling events. Before loud speakers became available handbells were the only method of bringing people out of their homes to hear our message or for mass canvassing. *I have still a handbell in my possession which helped to win many seats in South Wales in those days.*

We concentrated on women's meetings, specialising on problems affecting women. Canvassers were armed with topical notes and special literature and enthusiasm abounded among the workers.

There has been a tendency of late in by-elections to ignore special women's meetings and to tell canvassers their job is to get the "yes" or "no" for Labour from the electors. This to my mind is a great mistake. Electors are not robots. A little friendly word goes a long way to make them feel that they matter as individuals and as citizens. We need to train our canvassers

now for the General Election. The doorstep and the platform are our two greatest ways to victory.

Three Phases

There are three phases to be experienced in the life of any worth-while organisation. First, when the small band of pioneers start in their campaign they are ignored and laughed at. When they win converts to their cause they are persecuted, and in the final stage they win recognition.

We are now living in the last phase of recognition with political power. We must never forget the road along which we have travelled. Let us hold fast to the faith and idealism that inspired us in the early days. Socialism is not only a political creed to win political power. It is a way of life that reflects itself in our conduct in everyday living.

While bidding you "adieu" officially as organiser, may I say a very big "Thank you" to all the comrades at Head Office and in the country with whom I have been privileged to work for many years.

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Mr. L. D. Riches, aged 33, has been appointed full-time Agent at Richmond. An officer of Bexley Labour Party, Mr. Riches has lectured extensively for his local Party. He has been a trade union member for 17 years and holds the office of branch president. He is also a member of his local Trades Council Executive Committee.

Luton's newly-appointed agent is 40-year-old Mr. J. K. Browne, who has been agent at Barkston Ash since 1946. Prior to that he was agent for Birkenhead East Division where he served during the 1945 General Election and he was also sub-agent for the Wirral Division during the 1935 General Election. He has held numerous offices in his local Party and trade union and is a tutor for the National Council of Labour Colleges.

NEW CROSS EMPIRE

NEW CROSS, LONDON, S.E.14

TELEPHONE: Tideway 3891.

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

Week beginning:

- Feb. 2.—Vera Lynn and Variety.
.. 9.—Variety, etc.
.. 16.—Phyllis Dixey in "Peek A Boo."
.. 23.—Butlin's Holiday Mood, with Caryl and Mundy.
Mar. 1.—Big Bill Campbell.
.. 8.—Billy Cotton and Variety.
.. 15.—Spivs and Drones, with Ernie Lotinga.
.. 22.—Sid Millward and Nitwits.

This is your Theatre, so book early for the above shows. If you are not aware of our special terms to Labour Parties, etc., write to Bill Haywood, Liaison Officer, New Cross Empire, S.E.14. Let us help to plan your social activities. It is our job to help you enjoy your leisure hours.

All In Good Order

By COLIN MACPHEE

Here is the start of a new series which will give a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the workings of the various Departments at Head Office.

"What does your Department *do*?" is not the happiest of opening gambits at Transport House. You'd be surprised at the looks you get. But you're on pretty safe ground if you try it on with any member of the Despatch Department. For their Output Per Man Hour, so to speak, is on the record for all to see in the Party's Annual Report.

Just glance for a moment at the cold, hard figures of pamphlets, leaflets, posters, etc., packed up and sent out by the Despatch Department during a peak period—the 1945 General Election. The result looks like something to do with the National Debt but in fact it adds up to a pretty terrific job of work.

Delivering the Goods

THERE were despatched some 9,790,000 leaflets; 1,270,000 copies of pamphlets (with "Let Us Face the Future," of course, topping the list); 315,000 posters; 2,000,000 copies of the pictorial publication "Straight Left"; 1,256,000 copies of "The British Elector"; 320,000 cards of Speakers' Notes, in addition to a host of miscellaneous items. So you can see, the Despatch Department certainly delivers the goods.

Head of the Department is E. R. (Ted) Simmons, who has been at Transport House since 1918. I extracted from Mr. Simmons the rather remarkable piece of information that never once during that period has there been any complaint about the packing of any piece of literature.

All our pamphlets, posters, etc., have been delivered in good order. This is not to say that there have been no complaints. Of course there have. Any department dealing with such a volume of work inevitably has complaints, but not one on the specific subject of packing. Considering the immense amount of literature the Party has sent out over the past thirty years, I think this is a matter for quiet congratulation.

Perhaps the Department's most hectic session of all was before the 1929 General Election. Then all records for the despatch of material were broken. No fewer than 43,000,000 leaflets were

sent out together with nearly 9,000,000 copies of the Party's Election Manifesto "Labour's Appeal to the Nation."

Big Despatch Jobs

MR. SIMMONS also remembers a terrific rush in connection with the Party's Capital Levy literature in 1922 and 1923. Orders for this simply poured in from all parts of the country, many of them, no doubt, from somewhat nervous members of the public who thought that the Revolution had arrived. Recent big despatch jobs have been "Re-Birth of a Nation," and, of course, the best-selling "Town News" issued for the November elections.

Mr. Simmons' right-hand man is Will Green, who has been in the Department since he was a boy. Will is not only a first-rate despatch man. He has at least two other claims to fame. He is honorary secretary of the Sutton and Cheam D.L.P. and—whisper it—by far the best dancer among the men on the staff at Transport House. You should see the rush the girls make for his services at any of our infrequent staff "do's." We have never noticed any maidenly modesty on these occasions.

Another long-service man on the Despatch Department staff is cheerful and popular Arthur Gunn.

Miss Catherine Collins is another of the Department's mainstays. I hope she will not take it amiss if I say that she's a member of the light-fingered fraternity. She can collate and fold circulars with lightning speed, a specialised skill she acquired in the printing trade.

When it is realised that for every full Party circularisation—to constituency parties, trade unions, local parties, women's sections, Leagues of Youth, etc.—some 10,000 circulars and several other documents have to be sent out, it will be appreciated that Miss Collins has to work at top speed.

Think on These Things

THESE then are the personalities of our Despatch Department, which is surely one of the most unpublished of all our departments. Yet day in, and

day out, they are doing an essential job, efficiently and well.

When next you feel inclined to blame the Despatch Department for the late delivery of literature, remember (1) it is very often the printers' fault, and that said printers are often grappling with staff shortages; (2) that rail and postal deliveries sometimes take twice as long as before the war; (3) that perhaps 500-odd other D.L.P.s are also queuing up for deliveries of the same piece of literature.

It would help, too, if those who ordered literature made sure that there was someone at their end to receive it. Sometimes parcels go shuttling to and from Transport House in astonishing fashion.

And, above all, don't write queries about constituency rules, Bevin's Foreign Policy, or what-have-you on the same piece of paper that you use for ordering literature. No more effective formula has yet been found for gumming-up the works.

REGULAR DELEGATE CONFERENCES WILL BUILD UP MORALE AND COMBAT LETHARGY

Talking It Over

By **BILLY VAUGHAN**, General Secretary, Aberavon D.L.P.

A constituency can be strong politically in the wider electoral sense yet liable on occasions to fall badly by the wayside in face of crisis. There can only be one reason for this—a lack of continual political education among the key workers of the constituency party itself.

The vanguard in all political battles is the active body of key workers within a party. They are the factor to provide the power which almost jet-propels the electorate forward, or where lethargy and inaction prevails, to cause set-backs and retrogression in the constituency.

Here in Aberavon I think we have provided a solution to all this. Indeed, we have found it is the only antidote to the nefarious workings of the Communist pockets found everywhere.

We make a point of arranging at least four delegate conferences a year. This affords the opportunity for all key workers in local parties, wards, women's sections, Co-op. Guilds, and Trade Union organisations to meet together on common ground to discuss vital questions affecting the policy of our Party. We choose from among our galaxy of talent in the country an authority on a given question to speak to us. Then we open out and discuss the subject under review.

Honest Criticism

Anything from 150 to 250 delegates attend—not at all bad for a single Division. Aneurin Bevan once told me that our conferences were the best of their kind he had ever attended. The speaker does not have it all his own way. Here, within the party confines,

you have the honest criticism of good comrades expressing itself not in a carping sense, but in real doubt as to whether the Party is right or wrong in its approach and direction on certain aspects of party policy.

In the end, speaker and audience are all the better for it and here arises a deeper sense of understanding and recognition of the difficulties involved. We have often been able to see the fruits of our discussions here find a place in our national conclave. That is real democracy at work, and is as it should be.

May I give an example of how we realise these aims?

This month we have arranged for Dr. Stephen Taylor, M.D., M.P., to come along. His subject will be "The National Health Service." I have prepared a circular giving the date, place and time of meeting, the speaker and the subject to be discussed. This enables delegates to look up the subject before they come along. A fairly large panel paragraph is featured giving Dr. Taylor's record and the reasons why he is an authority on this subject. Then, and this is important, a place is given by which organisations can submit as many as five to eight delegates to attend.

A special point is made of asking for the name and address of each delegate. This is vital to the success of any conference and other Constituency Party secretaries must forgive me being blunt about this. It means a lot of work but it is worth while. It places you in a position to send a credential card to each delegate personally.

Proper Timing

Never mind about the work it entails. What is important is that it has effective results. Directly a comrade receives something in the truly personal sense, he or she feels they mean something in the Movement. This places them under a personal obligation to respond and works wonders from the attendance standpoint.

Right timing in sending out the credentials is also important. Always bear in mind the tendency on the part of most of us to forget and keep the credentials back to about a week prior to the date of meeting. You will then find that comrades put them on the mantelpiece as a reminder and are there on the job.

Well, that is our method, quite simple but extremely effective in practice. Remember, it is useless if done spasmodically or haphazardly. It must be done systematically or it is better not tried at all.

It is a way by which every unit within a Constituency Party knows

what the others are doing and thinking. It welds your Party together. The right hand knows what the left hand is doing; the centre is working in perfect harmony with the most remote outpost in the Division. Each comrade feels he is an important part of the Movement. Any feeling of frustration is defeated because every member is given a real opportunity. I am convinced that it is frustration more than anything else which provides so fertile a field for Communist infiltration.

Anyhow, that is how we do things in Aberavon and why we are able to take all electoral battles, whether local or national, in our stride. It is why we have knocked almost into extinction every other political party operating in the constituency. They may rise again when an election is brewing, but they have "missed the 'bus." A machine that is not continually oiled and kept well maintained cannot stand the pace.

If you have not already tried this, take my tip and "have a go."

DEADLINE

Have you any ideas, suggestions or comments on any of the articles in this issue, or on any aspect of Labour Party organisation?

Let's hear what your Party is doing. The Editor is always glad to consider contributions or letters for publication.

But please remember the deadline. Last date for receiving contributions is the 15th of each month for publication the following month.

All contributions to the Editor, "Labour Organiser," Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1.

A CHANCE FOR LABOUR WOMEN

Women between the ages of twenty-one and forty, working in the Trade Union and Labour Movement, who would like to embark upon a full-time university or college course, should apply for the Mary Macarthur Scholarship.

Selected applicants will be required to write an essay, and the final choice will be decided after an interview. The scholarship will cover up to two years' training and in previous years most of the students have been to the London School of Economics or to Ruskin College.

The scholarship will start next autumn and applications should be sent in by March 6, 1948.

Further particulars and application forms can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Eva M. Hubback, Morley College, 61, Westminster Bridge Road, London, S.E.1.

No!

Says A. L. WILLIAMS, Assistant National Agent

Councillor Harper of Derby thinks ("Labour Organiser: January) that the minimum membership subscription of 6d. a month is too high. In terms of the need of the Party it is not high enough.

In 1946, contributions received by the Party nationally for individual membership cards amounted to less than £15,000, and the total affiliation fees amounted to just over £66,000.

This money comprised the greater part of the income of the Party available for all its multitudinous national activities. It was insufficient to meet ordinary expenditure, to say nothing of necessary development between now and the next General Election. That is the reason the Development Fund was launched.

Party Couldn't Manage

The Party, nationally, certainly cannot manage with a smaller income and it is difficult to see how a constituency Labour Party can fight its annual local government elections, prepare for the General Election, and carry on its propaganda and educational work if its individual members subscribe less than 6d. a month.

After collectors have been paid commission, payment made to Head Office for individual membership cards, and a proportion retained by the Ward Committee for its own purposes, there is precious little left of the monthly sixpence for the constituency Labour Party, and in many constituencies individual membership subscriptions are the main part of the party's income.

The cost of everything has risen in recent years, but the cost of printing, stationery and advertising has risen even more steeply than most other things. The improved salary scales of agents will make an additional heavy drain on constituency finances.

There may perhaps be easier ways of raising funds than by collecting a

reasonable contribution from individual members of the Party, but there is no more satisfactory manner of financing our Party than by voluntary contributions of those who believe in it and its policy.

Most Have Jobs

Advocates of railway rationalisation used to be told of the terrible sufferings that would result for the widows, orphans and old people who, it was implied, held all the railway stock. Many of the advocates of a smaller contribution will have us believe that the bulk of the individual members of the Labour Party are made up of old age pensioners and unemployed persons.

If this were the case then the Labour Party would have no future, but this is by no means the case. Most of our members are men and women in full employment enjoying greatly increased rates of wages largely as a result of Labour and trade union policy.

It should not be too much to ask a supporter of the Party to contribute each month the price of three cigarettes, or half-a-pint of mild beer, to enable his Party to bring about the greatest social revolution in the history of mankind.

What Happened Before

Councillor Harper's belief that a smaller rate of contribution will result in a larger total of contributions is not supported by past experience. Before the minimum rate of contributions was fixed by a national rule, the rate varied from Party to Party, though the majority of parties asked for a contribution of 1d. a week.

The parties with the smallest membership were nearly always those which had continued to ask for the old contribution of 1/- a year.

Moreover, it is not without significance that the largest increase in individual membership in our history took place after the 6d. a month rule was imposed.

Yes!

Says **LESLIE S. POOLE**, Hon. Sec., Upper Norwood Ward,
North Croydon D.L.P.

I agree with Councillor Harper that the decision to increase the individual membership subscription to 6/- was disastrous.

Some of the members who develop into our most loyal and enthusiastic workers do not always start off as enthusiasts. To me it seems that the request for 6/- is going to turn away possible new members to whom such an amount would imply total commitment to a loyalty for which they are not yet prepared.

In my own Ward, of which I am Secretary, we have reached a total of over 400 members which is not too bad when you consider that, in spite of our most sincere efforts, our annual poll at the Municipal Elections is just over 1,700.

Let us be quite realistic about the whole thing. Out of our 400 odd members we have about a dozen really active workers and an attendance of two dozen at our monthly meetings would be considered quite good. From this you will gather that, in common with most local groups, many of our members are of the type who support the cause but do not appreciate the fact that they themselves are an integral part of the Labour Party.

These Schemes Won't Work

Schemes such as "Educate your members as well as the Electorate," "Work on the doorstep throughout the whole year," and "keep a careful file card system of the political sympathies of every person on the Electoral Register," or "Ensure that the whole of the Ward is kept constantly advised of the activities of our representatives on the Borough Council and at Westminster," may be possible elsewhere, but although we are a built-up area our comparatively well-organised Ward Party cannot hope to cope with such a programme.

Steep hills and twenty-five-yard-long front gardens increase the hazards of our forty or so miles of pavements. Our twelve active members religiously collected *all* the subs. last year, distributed various handbills and notices, enrolled 100 new members and were

mainly responsible for as live an election campaign as anywhere in the Borough.

Our opponents, who call themselves "Ratepayers," polled nearly three times as many votes, apparently for no reason whatsoever. I understand that you can join the "Ratepayers" for a shilling a year, and this, in my opinion, is the "Ratepayers"-cum-Tories' chief weapon.

Just imagine the effect if our own subscription were to be set at 1s. per annum. How many people whom we contact on the doorsteps could give sympathetic support to our cause and yet be unwilling to subscribe a shilling? No Tory, even were he or she to be attempting to mislead, would part with the money and it would be simpler than ever before to separate supporters from opponents.

To those members, to which I previously referred as being supporters but not an integral part of the Party, 6/- will seem something in the nature of a sacrifice to our local organisation which, so far, has always been on the losing side at Parliamentary and Municipal elections.

We know that regular collections would simplify matters, but in spite of our shortcomings, our payment into the general fund of our Divisional Party for 1947 is the highest on record for any of the seven Wards.

Associate Membership?

I wonder what would be the answer if we asked everyone responsible for collecting subs. just how many were missed during 1947. Enough, I imagine, to make the prospect of collecting a larger amount during 1948 rather grim.

Unfortunately, I missed A. L. Williams' article to which Mr. Harper referred, but from my own experience as Ward Organiser and subsequently Ward Secretary, I do not think it would be a retrograde step if something in the nature of Associate Membership should be considered, the payment in respect of this to be a nominal sum and the activities of such associate members to be confined to internal Ward business.

See also Readers' Forum, page 15

Subs: How Much Per Head of Your Membership?

By Councillor R. RADCLIFFE, Secretary, Ashton-under-Lyne D.L.P.

Few membership subscription reports state the amount *per head* paid by each member claimed. In actual fact very few reports refer to the gross amount collected and confine it to aggregate membership. Claims to large membership may fall into reasonable perspective if subjected to an "amount per head" test.

At times one asks if this mass membership pursuit can be overdone and if the National Party are apt to make this a test of a party's achievements? In other words is the Party becoming mass-member conscious? To enrol (on paper) a mass of electors willing to pay a fixed sum each week may provide a financial "cushion" and also a nucleus of support at elections, but it also brings other headaches.

A big membership is not the be all and end all of the movement. Nor is the ideal state one where a minute membership exists in a veritable Labour stronghold. Something between these two states should be aimed at.

During the war trade union organisation on remote building sites was difficult. One so-called "organiser" from one of the largest Unions paid periodic visits and actually "sold" membership cards at so much each in the manner of an auction sale. No attempt was made to organise in the accepted sense of the word, but the organiser departed boasting of a membership of so many on the site.

What Counts?

Most political organisers could conceive similar ideas in order to boost membership. Let's imagine that Attlee or Bevin are to speak at a Party demonstration. Would it be "cricket" if admission to the meeting was by membership card only and it was announced that these would be on sale to all and sundry at the entrance?

By such methods a party membership could increase by 500 overnight. But is this the best method of producing an "interested" membership?

And what, it may be asked, is an

"interested" membership?

Is it:—

A large paper membership?

Control of the Borough Council?

A Labour M.P.?

A successful Labour newspaper?

Amount of literature sales per head?

Amount of subscriptions per head?

Welcoming Newcomers

Each Party will incline to its own rough yardstick by which to measure the health of its membership.

On membership it would be interesting to know how various Parties welcome new members. Surely new members will be most influenced by first impressions.

Are members enrolled on membership canvass treated in the same way as those who write in voluntarily asking for membership?

One method (for what it is worth) is to acknowledge by post each application. This consists of a stock letter of welcome and also a printed diagram chart of the Party build-up. Sometimes a current pamphlet is enclosed.

Members made on street canvass are not "counted" until they have paid one month's subscriptions, for which a card is issued by the canvasser on the spot. Formal acknowledgment follows. Names are sent to Ward Secretary and collector and submitted to the General Committee for approval.

5s. per Head

No doubt some parties do the thing real grand by sending each new member an illuminated address, a portrait (in oils) of the local Member, together with a Labour Party diary. Others may have other more modest methods.

But whatever the method other parties will be interested to hear it.

The writer's Party membership of 1,000 netted £240 in 1947. Allowing for the inevitable "outs" and those who joined in mid-year, this averages about 5s. per head.

Voting Machines: Why Not?

Asks JACK CUTTER

Discussing the report of the Committee on Electoral Reform recently, I ventured the opinion that our voting methods were out of date. In this day and age the great British electorate still goes to vote in unsuitable school-rooms and church halls, often ill-lit and badly documented. We still use fiddling little scraps of paper which we mark with stubby bits of pencil in comic-opera contraptions made of canvas or three-ply.

I put forward a plea for voting by machine—by pressing a button on an automatic vote-recorder which would not only record the votes, but count them accurately and produce immediately at the close of the poll, a fool-proof and correct record of the votes cast for each candidate.

The colleagues with whom I discussed this suggestion were all election experts. Every one of them had handled scores and some of them hundreds of elections, and every one of them vehemently opposed the suggestion. As a matter of interest, I give you some of their objections with my answers to them.

The Answers

Machines, they said, were not fool-proof. They could make a mistake, and mistakes in such machines would have serious consequences. Computing machines, I replied, are used in banks and do the most intricate and complicated computations without error. Compared with such machines, a vote recorder would seem to be child's play.

What they asked, was there to prevent a voter pushing his button twice? Answer: a simple mechanical device.

The cost of such machines would be enormous, they argued. They would, as an initial charge. But their use would save expenditure in enumerators, other staff, embossing presses, ballot-papers, and a host of other impedimenta. The machines would be permanent and so devised that simple

adjustments would make them suitable for any particular election.

Suspicious of Machines

Then my colleagues put it to me that most people are suspicious of machines. They would prefer to be handed a piece of paper on which to mark their own cross and, if they made a mistake, to be able to ask for another paper and see their spoilt paper destroyed.

In other words, the chief disadvantage of machine voting seems to be our old friend, the psychological element. I daresay it would be mechanically possible to incorporate a cancelling device whereby the last vote could be cancelled and corrected in the case of a mistake, but if it is true that people prefer the old, unscientific way of leaving their personal mark on a piece of paper they have themselves handled, I have no answer to that one.

All the same, I remain of the opinion that machine voting and mechanical totalling would reduce the margin of human error to the minimum and would eliminate that prolific source of stomach ulcers and nervous breakdowns—the incompetent enumerator at the "Count."

What do you think about it?

"Spring" is not in February

It is generally agreed that it is a good thing to get rid of November elections and hold all Local Government contests in the Spring. I also agree if "Spring" means the month of May or the end of April at the earliest. If it means March, I am not enthusiastic. February is usually a month of foul weather and electioneering in February is, as a rule, worse than electioneering in October.

The Labour Party has always done best electorally when open-air electioneering is possible and the beginning of May, which would be clear of both a late Easter and an early Whit., would be an excellent time for both County and Borough Council elections.

Again, what do you think about it?

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Parties Which Need Agents

By L. H. M. HILLIARD, General Secretary, Agents' Union

May I take this opportunity of sending a message of thanks to all those members who wrote me recently whilst in hospital? I hope that I shall have been able to reply to all by the time these notes appear and am finding much pleasure in dealing with arrears of work that have accumulated. Dai Cousins, Chairman of London District, who carried on while I was away has already written of the many matters now engaging the close attention of the Union and Dick Windle's recent circular has dotted the "i's" and crossed the "t's."

A Call for Action

This circular is a call for action in 1948 and is a realist approach to the problem of agency appointment. The value of concentrated attention to organising problems, only possible where an agent is employed, is fully recognised; the procedure for the appointment of an agent is clearly defined; and above all encouragement is offered local parties to proceed to the appointment of a full-time officer by the payment not only of local development grants but by supplementary grants where necessary.

In divided Boroughs, where desirable, the grouping of constituencies may take place in order to ensure an integrated local organisation operating under adequate supervision.

This year should see a big development in the Party's agency service.

Under One Roof

Members are reminded that the Union is hoping to get as many of its members as possible together under "one roof" during conference week. Provisional arrangements have been made to reserve accommodation for members, who should now consider making application for same. London District has taken a "block booking" for 50, other districts are circularising members, but time is slipping past and I must have information soon. The hotel we have in mind is near to the Conference Hall, is only a few minutes from the sea, has every possible facility for its guests, and the inclusive charge is £1 per day. This is the prevailing rate for Scarborough for reasonable accommodation.

If you are coming to conference and

would like to stay with your fellow agents write and book accommodation at once. All I need at the moment is a note of your requirements.

N.F.P.W. Conference

The National Association of Professional Workers, to whom this organisation is affiliated, has been holding a series of Regional Conferences preparatory to the Annual Conference in London on May 1st. I hope that we may be able to secure representation at some of these regional conferences for they provide an excellent opportunity for members to learn something of the organisation. A crowded agenda shows that discussions will range over equal pay, office legislation, Patent Law reform, improved educational facilities, Joint Production Committees and appointments procedure.

We shall be represented at the London Conference and we are proposing to nominate and support Mr. P. T. Heady (R.C.A.) for the post of Honorary Treasurer, and Miss Anne Godwin (C.W.U.) for that of President.

A regional conference is to be held in Leeds on March 20th and I hope that Yorkshire District, who may send an area representation of 12, will make plans to be present. Members anxious to attend might like to have a word with Euan Carr on the subject.

Agents and Boundaries

The report of the Boundary Commission will stimulate much close thought in many constituencies. Clearly a number of agencies will disappear and a few new ones be opened up. A number of problems arise and discussions will soon be started at the Adjustments Board in order to clarify the position and agree upon procedure. A questionnaire recently completed by London District shews that the majority of the members believe that where agencies disappear the principle of seniority should decide who remains; (all things being equal) that agents displaced should receive special consideration in relation to new agency appointments and that, where appointments are being made in constituencies shortly to become redundant the temporary nature of the appointment should be stressed. News on this matter will be circulated shortly.

History of Union

A brochure setting out the history of the Union, its aims and objects, an outline of its organisation and a directory of members. Your copy will be mailed when completed, together with

an amended copy of the rules.

Sincere good wishes from the Executive Committee to all our members and all success to their efforts in the constituencies for the Movement during the year 1948!

Readers' Forum

Are our "subs" too high? Yes, six bob is a lot too high. It will keep out those with smaller incomes; and those who would not hesitate to pay 5/- or even 10/- to attend a Party Ball, but who would object to high subs. Get cash from opponents if and when you can; and raise plenty of cash in more pleasant ways. Keep subs low; increase membership by smaller subs, which will prove more attractive generally. Councillor Harper is right. Only fools will think otherwise.

R. T. PHILLIPS.

15, Market Street,
Wigan.

Comparisons

It is estimated that the amount spent on Football Pools each week averages 2s. 6d. per punter. The weekly cinema-goers who spend between 1s. and 3s. 6d. for their relaxation, number millions. The smoker spends shillings each day on that habit and probably supplements it by an occasional pint at the "local."

The Labour Party member (who will probably recognise that he or she is in at least one of the above categories) pays 1½d. per week for the privilege of belonging to our Party.

It is generally assumed that members are politically conscious. Why else should they join the Party? And yet, sometimes I wonder. Anything between 5s. and £1 per week on pools, pictures, smokes and beer and the like. Three-halfpence per week for the Labour Party, plus whatever else can be obtained by the sale of Party literature, from social functions and so on, amounting, perhaps, to about 9d. or 1s. per week.

If, moreover, it dare be suggested that the recognised need for increased income be achieved by the obvious method of raising membership fees from 1½d. to 3d. weekly, then things really begin to hum! Preposterous suggestion. But, isn't it true to say

that upon the strength of our Party (1½d. to 1s. weekly), depends the opportunity of enjoying pools, pictures, smokes, beer, etc. (5s. to £1 weekly)? Without a strong Party, no Labour Government; no Labour Government, no full employment; no full employment, no 5s. to £1 to spend on pools, pictures, smokes and beer, etc. Is it really such a preposterous suggestion?

There are, of course, some who cannot spend either on pools, etc., or afford much for the Party, there are also some who give considerably more than the average person to help the Party. To the rest of our members I put this question: Will you give more to the Socialist cause?

LEN MAYNARD

(Brentford and Chiswick L.P.)

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Miners Build for Victory

By W. G. MARSHALL, Assistant Scottish Organiser

West Fife has a much-publicised Communist M.P. But the constituency Labour Party is going from strength to strength and high hopes are entertained that the seat will be won back for Labour at the General Election.

It is said that an ancient Scottish king, visiting the old coal mine worked by the monks at Culross, was persuaded to go underground, and after travelling for some distance was brought to the surface again. Perceiving he was surrounded by water he cried "Treason! This is treason!" He had come up on an island in the Firth of Forth.

Coal mining is still the main industry in West Fife. It is fitting, therefore, that miners form the major part of the membership of the West Fife D.L.P. Railwaymen are also numerous in the active ranks, and so are transport workers, paper workers, the workers in the distributive trades, the Co-operative Societies, and the women's sections.

West Fife is a constituency of many contrasts. In the centre, where coal mining has been pursued for many years, the worst features of this industry scar the countryside, and the ramshackle miners' rows, heritage of "private enterprise" in coal mining, are testimony to the relentless economic lash wielded by the unlamented colliery owners.

Membership 1,500

West of the constituency is the most fertile land in Scotland. A narrow strip along the banks of the river Forth, producing high quality market gardens and in the extreme west, afforestation.

The most easterly part is very varied. Good farms, dairy, stock rearing and crops, separated by little villages and towns wherein an amazing diversity of industry flourishes. In one town alone I have counted twelve different small light industries. But even in this part the reeking pit lums are making their appearance, despoiling the serene countryside.

A hive of industry. Appropriately the Labour Party is extremely hard working, too. Against strong opponents financially, the Labour Party has organised an individual membership which approaches the 1,500 mark. Many Trade Unions and Co-operative Societies are affiliated to the Party.

The National Council of Labour Colleges has done valuable pioneering work in working-class education here. The remarkably high standard of efficiency in organising, administration, and political awareness of the West Fife D.L.P. members is a tribute to the skill of the voluntary efforts of the tutors of independent working-class education.

Classes for candidates for the County, Town and District Councils are a regular branch of Labour Party activity. Lectures on current affairs, discussion groups, and organising technique and conduct of elections form the winter syllabus of most of the local parties. A speakers' panel, comprising voluntary speakers within the constituency, each speaker undertaking a subject in which to specialise.

In this way West Fife has sent to the County Council some of the ablest of Labour Party specialists in Scottish Local Government.

Long before most District Councils had taken up the provision of playing fields for adults and children, Labour District Councils in West Fife had secured those for their communities.

Many Social Activities

Now, although short of a majority on the County Council, the Labour Party form the majority of the Housing Committee and are carrying to completion a comprehensive housing programme designed to banish for ever the squalid conditions which they have to combat.

Local Labour Parties in the constituency carry through a wide range of political, educational and social activities.

A flair for organising successful dramatic entertainment is evident in Glenraig, whose secretary, P. J. Kelly, is himself a versatile entertainer. The emphasis is on music at Cardenden, where J. C. Robertson is the leader, teacher and organiser. Crossgates favour the theatre and arrange outings

in the summer and autumn to places of interest. Peter Walker is the man behind the scenes here.

At Lumphinans, where there is a strong women's section, the womenfolk carry through treats for the old people, picnics for the children, and are always represented at day and week-end schools.

Variety is the spice of life at Thornton, where a vigorous Labour Party supplies much of the political and social needs of the people.

Kelty is really the political headquarters of the D.L.P. Here the Labour College is going strong, and here, too, we find a reservoir of talented young people, some serving the Party and holding important offices in the Labour, Trade Union and Co-operative Movement. The leader of the County Council Labour Group is the member from Kelty, John Sneddon, as well known outside Fife as he is well known inside.

West Fife is an example of a Labour Party whose interests are the interests of the people. In every sphere of life, in every social, educational, cultural and administrative body catering for the people as a whole, there you will find members of the Labour Party in West Fife.

It is just not possible in an article of this length to tell of every Local Labour Party, but the samples given are illustrative of the varied work being done.

Next Time—Victory!

And so the work goes on, with a very definite aim indeed. The aim is to capture the Parliamentary seat for Labour at the *next election*, and to capture a majority on the Fife County Council.

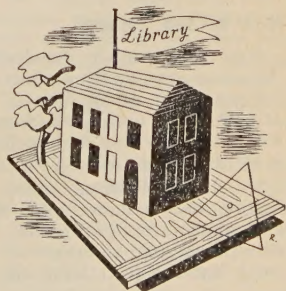
At the last General Election the Labour candidate in West Fife was Bill Hamilton, a miner's son from Sunderland. He scared the wits out of the sitting member to such a degree that the said Member refused to shake hands after the contest. Bill Hamilton is young and energetic, equipped with a degree in economics and a full understanding of a miner's life learned in a miner's home.

With only three weeks in the constituency before the election he gathered immense support, and with a reasonable time to prepare for the next fight, more than a scaring of wits is expected—this time the opponent has to receive the K.O.

My money goes on the Labour candidate to win!

Public Libraries PUBLICITY

The emphasis is not casual. If you are active in municipal affairs, especially if you serve on the Libraries' Committee, you know how often the Library is the focal point for local information. From the Libraries Dept. issues much information as well as books. Where the service embraces discussion and music groups, exhibitions, civic weeks organisation, it may be useful to you to know that CAS—the publicity organisation-with-the-social-purpose—specialises in the production of all kinds of publicity material for such events. May we help with YOUR next municipal venture?



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CAS

It's Easy to Raise Money

By R. T. PHILLIPS

Raising money is an easy task. The first and most important requirement is a well-organised, active, interested and informed Women's section in every ward, or every area of a County division. Their co-operation will make a success of all kinds of money-raising projects.

The Agent/Secretary's office may be the source where plans are studied, developed and amplified; but it is in the homes of the people that the spirit to carry them through must be cultivated. If we can introduce enthusiasm, humour or fun, there will be no danger of boredom and frustration.

Here is a small scheme which brought over £3 profit in one afternoon. An ordinary housewife arranged to have a beetle-drive and dominoes party at her house. She invited 24 women to the event, telling them the object was to raise funds for welfare work. Each of them paid a shilling, and a cup of tea and a small cake were included free. Small prizes were given, and gifts from friends were raffled. That afternoon a profit of over £1 was made. Some women had come seven miles for an afternoon's entertainment. Chairs and small tables were borrowed; parlour, kitchen and hall were brought into use. Everybody was happy and on this occasion particularly so because they were able to go round the adjacent garden first, and flowers helped to brighten the rooms during the games.

How to Sell Tickets

Recently another housewife raised the same amount by a whist drive and hot-pot. Not much "brass," you may say. Maybe, but if you have only 12 wards in a division and each raises £3, it will be £36 in all.

In Ince division, one Women's Section had a dance and whist drive and made over £11 profit. They are now arranging another to build up funds for the next local elections. In

Wigan the farmers, butchers, and others are arranging to hold their Annual Ball, and 1,200 tickets at 5/- or more are common experience. One dance hall for 1,200 will bring a lot of money to the "kitty." Labour can do the same if it wants.

The secret is to sell tickets to everybody, including those who cannot or will not come. Some, especially political opponents, only come for whist. Make them feel at home by a word of welcome. You are getting their money and their confidence now; eventually you may get their vote and support.

Articles suitable for spot prizes, raffles and sales are tea-cosies and cushions, either round, square, or oblong. These are easily made. The inside tick of the cushion holds the kapok and the outside is made from any good well-washed and ironed material. The cover may be made from old velvet or other material. We have bought dozens of these articles to give for prizes, and many of them adorn our sitting-room. They are admired by visitors who do not realise they are made from second-hand material.

Bazaars are Money-Spinners

A small or large bazaar will bring in a lot of money; but keep on making money with small events even when preparing for a large bazaar. I remember a church bazaar in Burnley which took nearly 12 months to prepare but eventually brought in over £1,000 profit. For this a lot of regular, voluntary collectors were needed. Some collected money, others collected or promised materials, and all collectors were taught that regularity and promptitude are necessary in both cases. People were asked to state how much money they would be prepared to save each week. Threepence a week for 40 weeks is 10/-. Vouchers are eventually given to represent money saved and in the meanwhile official receipts are given for every sum paid in.

Mr. Phillips will continue his money-raising suggestions next month

Are the Women to Blame?

Asks [Miss] JOHNNY FOOKES, Norwich

"If we want equality in the Party, it's no good asking for favours because we are women."

It was suggested in an article in the January "Organiser" that women are not getting their fair share of Parliamentary candidatures, and that unless a woman has "really outstanding qualifications" most Parties will still choose a man as their candidate.

It seems to me that it's about time for women members of the Labour Party to forget that they are "women" and concentrate on being Socialists. Moreover, surely Parties are quite right in not choosing a woman—or man—unless she has outstanding qualifications.

There is only one good reason for nominating anyone for Party or public office—that is because, out of all the possible people with qualifications for the job, here is the *best* candidate. The fact that the candidate might happen to be a woman is of no importance at all.

It is, of course, arguable that when someone with knowledge of child welfare is required, a woman might be the best candidate because of her specialised knowledge; but the stress must be on the knowledge of child welfare and not on just being a woman. In other words, *any* woman won't do, she must be a woman with that particular knowledge—and we aren't all mothers or school teachers. A male doctor specialising in children's work might be equally capable, and I suppose even a male teacher might know something about children.

No Special Claim

But this special knowledge of children's needs is only a very small part of the all-round knowledge needed in a democratic Parliament. I think one reason why women don't get the chances they perhaps deserve is due to just this tendency to lay a special claim to candidature in public service merely because they happen to be women, the inference being that as women they have special qualifications because of their professional or amateur knowledge of children.

If women thus label themselves as child specialists, people naturally tend to forget that they may have other abilities besides knowing how to wash the baby. And since what most people look for in a Parliamentary candidate

is outstanding abilities of an "all-round" nature, they don't feel inclined to rush round looking for a woman.

All-Round Ability

I happen to work in a mainly rural constituency, and I think most of the electors would, politics apart, be prejudiced towards someone with these "all-round" abilities, even when combined with some knowledge of agriculture or the rural way of life. Due to this inability to think of women except as housewives and mothers, they would, I think, picture their ideal candidate as a man. The tragedy is that there might be a woman with the right "all-round" qualifications, and a knowledge of agriculture and rural life, just round the corner.

We've plenty of women in the Party with general knowledge and experience, and if we want equality in the Party—or anywhere else—it is for us to stand up on our own two legs and fight for it without asking for any favours because we are women. If our capabilities are up to the male standard we don't need favours—there is no need for favours between equals—and if our capabilities are not up to standard, we must go on with our training until they are.

After all, we're going through one of the toughest fights in our history. We aren't playing a polite game of croquet.

SOMETHING TO DISCUSS

David and George both believe in the need for public ownership. George favours the public corporation on the lines of the Central Electricity Board with minimum control by Parliament. David holds strongly to the view that nationalised industries should be run by a Government department under a Minister answerable to the House of Commons, and quotes the G.P.O. as his model.

Detailed arguments on these different ways of administering publicly-owned industries are given in dialogue form in *What is a Socialised Industry?* by Michael Young, a Fabian Society discussion pamphlet obtainable from Fabian Publications, Ltd., 11, Dartmouth Street, S.W.1, price 6d. It should certainly provoke fresh thought and argument in any discussion group.

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